

Saturday, May 5, 12
/C-II/ DE Crisis Patterns

C-II shows both Fait Malaccompli pattern for K, and Gambling with Catastrophe Pattern (K/T).

Both manage to keep secrecy longer and better than the other expects: a) transport of missiles to Cuba (time from decision); b) EXCOMM discussions between Oct. 16 and 22. JFK's invasion preparations are no secret from Cuba or SU or from JCS (but from public, Repubs). But K keeps certain secrets much too long for his own good (Strangelove Perplex); and JFK keeps his readiness to concede secret for 25 years (a secret about dovishness—and betrayal of Stevenson—much more significant than the private deal offered by RFK, secret for 7 years: both distorting “lessons” of crisis, advantage of brinkmanship. It's true that neither of these actually affected the course or outcome, it **was** a combination of threats along with Castro's independence of SU control, K's reckless, secret choices, known to him but not made known to JFK: **real** dueling on the brink (Drummond and ...) ((with only one duelist knowing how close they are to the brink!)

(Both meant, like Dulles, to go to the brink—quote—but back off if necessary, at the last moment; but **(one knew) there was a third actor, fully prepared to go over the brink, and acting independently!**

(see notes on F&N)

With Keating speech on Oct. 6 claiming six IRBM sites being prepared in Cuba (WAS he right? How DID he know?), White House was in danger of appearing “incompetent or deceitful” if he turned out to be right.

(CF if internal warnings about 9-11 had been leaked to the press beforehand! As it was, the WH is suspected to this day about being either incompetent or deceitful or both.)

K's deception had made JFK vulnerable to humiliation (almost immediately, in November elections! A certainty...unless he took risky, incalculable (really) action, uncontrollable (really: more than he realized);

Likewise, JFK speech on Sept. 5 meant that K could either accept a short-term humiliating backdown from preparations for the deployment—211 (would it be certain to leak? But it would be known to insiders, in SU and Cuba: humiliating before them; fear of being ousted? As he was.)—or to take a risky gamble.

My K/T pattern, choice of gamble to avert an otherwise certain short-run humiliation.

But also Fait Malaccompli: deception increasing vulnerability of opponent to humiliation, raising chance of an enraged and violent and risky reaction if the project is discovered prematurely (or even, perhaps, if it is not, and is unveiled as a FA). (See Skybolt, SAME YEAR, right after C-II: I study in 1964, along with C-II study; before Tonkin Gulf).

Dom Pol dominant on both sides.

LACK OF CONTROL

Concern about the other's control; about one's own; threat of loss

230. In recommending full invasion at 11 on Oct. 18 Thursday, **what was JCS assuming** about presence of nuclear warheads? Possibility of firing under attack, whether air attack or invasion? Possibility of tac nucs against invasion?

225: on first meeting of XCom on Oct. 16, McN assumes that nuclear warheads might already be present (as they were) and thus that an air attack would be folly! (Yes: does he change either of those assumptions?)

On 18th, JFK "overruled concerns—especially those expressed by McNamara—that any use of force implied taking the risk of an inadvertent nuclear war. Kennedy doubted that the Soviets would react to a US military strike by launching their Cuba missiles" unless they're going to be using them from every place." He assumed that Moscow controlled the missiles and that the danger of a nuclear accident was low. In Kennedy's mind Berlin was his only Achilles' heel in this crisis. He assumed that the soviets' proportional response would be a similar action against West Berlin. Then what would he do? What could he do?"

[McN was right, JFK wrong. JCS? Taylor? Others? JFK was wrong about Moscow control of any of the missiles; and didn't even know about the FROGS. [Hyp: Castro was especially furious at the removal of the FROGS.] He was wrong that Berlin was the only problem; or that there was a low chance of unauthorized action or inadvertent war (from point of view of Moscow—or US) CHECK EXCOMM TRANSCRIPTS]

--JFK always assumed that Berlin was his "Achilles heel" (or, as K put it, his "corn"); then, during crisis, Turkish missiles.

Strangely, the Americans never seemed to take into account, in threatening or considering SIOP, Khrushchev's capability against Europe, what K regarded as his hostages! (against which he had a vast and invulnerable threat).

Thus, my Gilpatric speech told him that his buildup of missiles against Europe provided insufficient deterrence of our non-nuclear or nuclear responses to a blockade of Berlin or takeover.

-- Claire Lewicki Dr. (Nicole Kidman), Days of Thunder

- Dr. Claire Lewicki: Tell me what you love so much about racing. Cole Trickle: Speed. To be able to control it. To know that I can control something that's out of control.
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- You and Rowdy have the same sickness, it's called denial and it's probably going to kill you both.
- Control is an illusion, you infantile egomaniac. Nobody knows what's gonna happen next: not on a freeway, not in an airplane, not inside our own bodies and certainly not on a racetrack with 40 other infantile egomaniacs.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

[INOPERATIVE!] Polmar claims that the “second message” (mentioning Turkish missiles) was actually sent first on Friday, Oct. 25 (Moscow time) but “somehow the message got tangled up in the Western Union system and was not delivered to the White House until the following morning in Washington. In the intervening hours, Khrushchev had a fitful night on his Kremlin office couch, tossing and turning while he wondered whether adding the Turkish missile caveat [to an earlier draft, adding it at the last moment] had been wise. “ ...²¹⁷ He decides to rescind the Turkish swap, and send the earlier draft version of the message, which had not called for the Jupiters to be removed. This message went through smoothly and actually beat the earlier letter to the White House.”

[BUT: in contradiction to all other versions?! Also, the two letters are different in tone and style; the one that arrived first is actually much longer (no?) and rambling, personal; It should have taken longer to send and decode than the “second” arriving Saturday morning. Is the Saturday (arriving, the “first” arriving second) really an earlier draft of the one arriving Friday night?

If this were true (!) then the interpretations at the time, and also those since, are reversed. The Trollope Ploy of ignoring the ‘second’ is really responding to the later one, the softer, considered one, after all. Polmar is saying that it was composed and sent Saturday morning in Moscow; That can’t be; the “long cable” was sent during the day on Friday and considered by the ExComm Friday night (when I saw it, anyway; Friday in sections, during the day). It couldn’t have been sent, as Polmar says, Saturday morning. NO, this looks like a big error by Polmar, in facts and interpretation.

[YES: Sergei’s “Nikita Krushchev” makes it clear that Polmar got this backwards: unaccountably, since he actually references Sergei’s work as his reference? An absolutely inexplicable misreading!]